



# Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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## Gov. Gregoire proclaims Aug. 12-19 as Farmers Market Week

**OLYMPIA** – Washington state residents are encouraged to show their support for family farms by shopping at their local farmers market during the upcoming “Washington State Farmers Market Week.”

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) and Washington State Farmers Market Association (WSFMA) join Governor Chris Gregoire in proclaiming Aug. 12-19 as a time to recognize “the many benefits of our local farmers markets.”

Farmers markets in Washington increased from 60 in 1998 to more than 90 in 2006. Statewide, farmers markets reported \$24 million in sales in 2005, up \$2 million from the previous year. Most of those dollars go directly to Washington family farmers.

“From Anacortes to Vashon and Bridgeport to Spokane, thousands of people are shopping each week in a fun atmosphere to buy fresh in-season produce, flowers and other items,” said Melisa Evangelos, president of the WSFMA and manager of the Tacoma Farmers Market.

“Farmers markets play a vital role in rural and urban economies throughout the state, and are increasing in popularity every day,” Evangelos said.

Farmers markets provide family farmers with direct access to the full retail dollar for their products, and provide the public with access to some of the freshest, best-tasting produce available.

One of WSDA’s goals is to increase farmer and consumer awareness of the convenience and value of farmers markets. The Small Farm and Direct Marketing Program at WSDA and WSFMA work together to develop farmers markets across the state.

“What’s really exciting about the expanding field of farmers markets is that many towns have several locations for markets,” said Fred Berman, WSDA Small Farm & Direct Marketing program coordinator. “This gives producers more opportunities to sell their products and consumers more flexibility to buy fresh local produce.”

Many farmers markets are hosting special events to celebrate their growth and popularity. For farmers market locations, contact information, and more information on the WSFMA, visit [www.wafarmersmarkets.com](http://www.wafarmersmarkets.com). For a produce seasonality chart, go the Web site of the WSDA *From the Heart of Washington* campaign at [www.heartofwashington.com](http://www.heartofwashington.com) and click on “Get it Fresh.”

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